

REMARKS

This response is submitted in reply to the Office Action of June 17, 2005. Claims 1-12 are currently pending in the application.

Claims 1-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 4,602,129 to Matthews ("Matthews") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,550,907 to Carlsen ("Carlsen"), U.S. Patent No. 6,483,899 to Agraharam, et al. ("Agraharam"), and U.S. Patent No. 5,794,039 to Guck ("Guck"). For the reasons set forth below, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections have been overcome or are improper.

Applicant respectfully submits that one of skill would not, without hindsight, combine the teachings of Matthews with Carlsen, Agraharam and Guck and, even if such references were to be combined, the combination does not disclose, teach or suggest the elements of the claimed invention.

Of the pending claims at issue, Claims 1, 4, 7 and 10 are independent. Claim 1 recites a communication system connected to a network. The system of Claim 1 allows terminals in the system to mutually communicate through communication data addressed to a common phone number, and comprises means for registering a predetermined communication terminal. Claim 4 claims a communication system similar to Claim 1, but, unlike the system of Claim 1, recites means for registering an arbitrary communication terminal, after being accessed by the arbitrary terminal. Claim 7 recites a communication method by which a plurality of communication terminals connected to a network communicate through communication data addressed to a common phone number. Like the system of Claim 1, the network comprises means for registering a predetermined communication terminal. Claim 10 also recites a communication method, but the method comprises the steps of registering an arbitrary communication terminal, sending a message to a common phone number, leaving a message, and reading the message.

Matthews teaches a voice messaging system for the deposit, storage and delivery of audio messages to a number of users. The Office Action states that Matthews teaches every aspect of the claimed invention, except for means for registering a predetermined communication terminal. Applicant respectfully disagrees, however, that a common phone number issued by a management terminal, as defined by Claims 1 and 7 of the present application, is present in Matthews. As opposed to a common phone number, Matthews teaches an address, such as a

three digit distribution list code, that stores one or more previously defined telephone numbers of members of the group. See Col. 22, lines 59-65. These members do not enter or dial this distribution code to access the communications network. In fact, the members do not have access to each other's three digit code, meaning that this code is not a "common phone number" through which the communication terminals "mutually communicate." As such, Matthews does not suggest, teach or disclose this element, which is seen in Claims 1 and 7 of the application.

The Office Action states that, while Matthews admittedly does not disclose means for registering a predetermined communication terminal so as to correspond to a common phone number, Carlsen does. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Carlsen does not disclose, teach or suggest a system whereby subscribers utilize a common phone number to send and/or receive messages from other subscribers. The predetermined communication terminal of the claimed invention is not just "registered," it is registered to a common phone number, as stated in the claims. Carlsen, in contrast, is directed to a system for routing messages to subscribers at the locations most recently visited or used by the subscriber, and does not utilize a common phone number. The Office Action states that Carlsen teaches a common phone number corresponding to a predetermined communication terminal, relying primarily on FIG. 6 of Carlsen and its description. However, the specification of Carlsen states that "each subscriber has a personal telephone number" (Col 6, line 41). In FIG. 6, each subscriber uses a different phone number to enter a single login code of #1. However, this login code is not the phone number of the claimed invention. As such, Applicant believes that Carlsen and Matthews, even if combined, fail to render the claimed invention obvious.

With respect to Matthews in view of Agraharam, the Office Action notes that Matthews fails to disclose a first mode in which the message file is to be directly sent to the other communication terminals, but states that Agraharam remedies this deficiency. Applicant respectfully submits that neither reference, even if combinable, suggests, teaches or discloses the claimed invention.

Agraharam discloses a network-based voice messaging system that converts the voice message into a text message and transmits it to recipients. While Agraharam teaches that the message may be transmitted to multiple recipients, it does not do so via a common phone number. In the present invention, the message file is sent by accessing from a registered

communication terminal to the common phone number to other registered terminals when a first mode is selected. No such method of transfer is taught or even suggested by Agraharam. Moreover, Agraharam fails to provide other aspects of the claimed invention, such as a second mode in which any registered communication terminal has access to the message, or means for leaving a message by accessing a bulletin board unit.

Further, Applicant does not believe that the Patent Office can rely solely on Agraharam for the assertion that the first mode of the present invention would be obvious to one of ordinary skill. Indeed, the clear emphasis of Agraharam is on the transmission of a message converted from oral to text. See Agraharam, abstract. Thus, Applicant does not believe that one skilled in the art would be inclined to modify Matthews in this manner solely in view of Agraharam to render obvious the claimed subject matter.

With respect to Matthews in combination with Guck, the Office Action notes that Matthews fails to disclose a second mode in which any registered communication terminal accesses the message management unit, but states that Guck remedies this deficiency. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Guck teaches methods for storing and retrieving messages. Like the above-cited references, Guck fails to disclose a system comprising a commonly-used phone number among terminals. Guck discloses a bulletin board system by which a user can ask the server whether there are new messages on the bulletin board, or by which a user can be notified of new messages. However, this notification is via an e-mail message. See Col. 8, line 21. In the claimed invention, the second mode is established as part of means for sending a message file sent by accessing from a registered communication terminal to the common phone number to other registered terminals. No such mode is taught, suggested or disclosed by Guck. As such, Applicant respectfully submits that Guck does not render the present invention obvious.

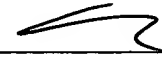
Based on at least these reasons, Applicant believes that the cited art, even if combinable in any hypothetical combination, is distinguishable from the claimed invention and thus fails to render obvious same. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the obviousness rejections be withdrawn.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance and earnestly solicits reconsideration of same.

Respectfully submitted,

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